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Council President Pro Tem Jim Madaffer Supports Proposed Wildland Firefighting Capability

Council President Pro Tem Jim Madaffer announced his support for Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposal today to increase wildland firefighting capability. The governor is calling for a statewide surcharge of 1.25 percent on all residential and commercial property insurance or approximately \$10 per household annually to pay for air and ground firefighter equipment and personnel.

"The October wildfires were a tragic reminder that we need additional firefighting staff, equipment and resources. It's a statewide issue. We need to improve our firefighting capabilities as well as our fire prevention and suppression system," said Councilmember Madaffer. "Additionally, our firefighting assets need to be geographically mobile. This requires cooperation, preparedness and investment throughout the state of California."

He said the proposal will save homeowners money in the long run by limiting the damage caused by fires and other natural disasters that cost the state government and policyholders billions of dollars.

Councilmember Madaffer said wildfires are a serious threat to Californians and all Californians end up paying for the destruction they cause such as the 2003 Cedar Fire and the 2007 Witch Creek Fire. For example, the cost to taxpayers for last year's wildfires in Southern California has reached \$291 million.

He said more assets will help contain blazes thereby reducing the loss of life and property. This surcharge will provide an immediate means to implement this public safety necessity.

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